Mt. Culmen Clarion

A Newsletter of Mt. Culmen EC Church

*"What I tell you in the dark, say in the light;
and what you hear whispered, shout from the rooftops!"*

Volume 7 - Issue 6 - June 2024

Pastor
Rev. Jonathan J. Brown
717-205-6532

Lay Delegate
Rebekah Brown

Alternate Lay Delegate
Kenneth Bannon

Board President
Floyd Mast

Board Vice President
Delrea Ream

Board Secretary
Sharon Mast

Church Treasurer
Esther Stauffer

Trustees:
Floyd Mast
Barry Ream
David Rissler
Delrea Ream

Stewards:
Esther Stauffer
Joyce Garber
Kim Sweigart
Debra Brubaker

Members-at-Large:
Sharon Mast

Making Glad the Father's Heart

– Rev. Jonathan Brown

Isn't Proverbs a remarkable book? Filled with collected thoughts, you'll never run out of things to learn or meditate on. What we might often forget, though, is the overall theme of the book, the way these sayings and discourses are presented. After an introduction attributing King Solomon with ultimate responsibility for the project (Proverbs 1:1), and a few lines encouraging us to dive in and enrich ourselves with *"the words of the wise and their riddles"* (1:2-6), we're told that true knowledge has no beginning other than a reverent attitude toward the LORD God (1:7a). This is a quest, though, which fools – rebels against God and his ways, disrespecters of God's creation, people who'd rather cling to comfortable ignorance than undergo the discomfort of growth – abstain from: *"Fools despise wisdom and instruction"* (1:7b). Are you like that, or will you listen?

Only in verse 8 does the book begin talking to its reader directly: 'You,' the word stares at you from the page. But how does the author imagine his relationship to you?

"Hear, my son, your father's instruction" (1:8). That's the key to this whole book, as it turns out. This is a father talking to his son. The things in this book have been carefully curated, handpicked as the fatherly wisdom that an ideal father in Israel would pass on to a son he wants to see succeed in life – as any father should hope for a good life and good things for his children. Maybe your father was like that, and sought to give you real wisdom to live by. Maybe he wasn't – and in that case, Proverbs has you covered. Maybe as a father, you want to be like that. Well, Proverbs is full of things to share.

"A wise son hears his father's instruction" (13:1) – that's a major difference between the wise son and the foolish son – so *"hear, O sons, a father's instruction"* (4:1), says the book. Aiming children toward being wise and righteous – to have skill at living, and to direct their actions according to virtue – is one of the main tasks entrusted to a father.

Alas, *"a foolish son is a grief to his father"* (17:25), even *"a ruin to his father"* (19:13); but, on the other hand, *"he who loves wisdom makes his father glad"* (29:3). For *"the father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him"* (23:24). And if that's true of (ideal) earthly fathers, how much more of a Father in heaven? *"The LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights"* (3:12). This Father *"disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness"* (Hebrews 12:10). As we mark Father's Day, let us give thanks for a Father who will not allow us to settle for being fools, but who is training us to be the wise sons who, created anew in the Son who is Wisdom, cannot help but gladden the heart of God.

Please visit us online at
facebook.com/MtCulmenEC

Mount Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church
1885 Turkey Hill Road, East Earl, PA 17519
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00 AM

Board Meeting Notes (May 2024)

Last month, the Official Board of Mt. Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church convened its meeting after the worship service on Sunday, May 5, 2024, to conduct the business of the church. In attendance at the meeting were 12 members of our church board: Floyd Mast, Sharon Mast, Del Ream, Barry Ream, Kim Sweigart, Esther Stauffer, Joyce Garber, Dave Rissler, Debra Brubaker, Ken Bannon, Rev. Jonathan Brown, and Rebekah Brown.

Opening with prayer and roll call, the board heard the customary reports.
Of these, the treasurer's report submitted by Esther Stauffer noted:

- April 2024 income of $3,637.00
- April 2024 expenses of $5,188.49
- a April 30 ending balance of $9,341.13

The secretary's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Kim Sweigart, seconded by Del Ream.
The treasurer's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Joyce Garber, seconded by Kenny Bannon.

The stewards had no report.

The trustees expressed gratitude for Melvin Newswanger for having cleared the dirt pile where the former parsonage stood, and said that on a clear day, they intend to fully level the dirt and plant grass seed there. The trustees also said they hoped to schedule another church clean-up day in the near future. There was also discussion of the possible removal of a certain stone, but if this happens, something must be placed to redirect water to avoid property damage. Floyd Mast mentioned he'd received notice that our septic tank is approaching the three-year mark when regulation requires it to be emptied, and so he will contact someone regarding that matter.

Trustee chair Floyd Mast mentioned that he had attended a cemetery meeting held recently at Willow Street Mennonite Church. About 120 people were present. Floyd shared with the board information he had learned. Not all cemeteries have bylaws. Certain townships do request that cemeteries use vaults, and so Floyd intends to make an appointment to talk with a representative of Eckenroth Funeral Home to find out more. Some cemeteries allow for private opening and closing of graves, so long as a witness from the cemetery is present. The largest topic of discussion, Floyd said, was cremations. There is no particular law governing where people can keep or scatter ashes, and cremation “seems to be the big thing right now.” Floyd had inquired about the issue of not being given paperwork for cremated remains, and found it's a common problem other cemeteries face. Temporary veteran markers should eventually be replaced with a more permanent kind. Large headstones need to have a foundation underneath to avoid tilting. People who leave plants in front of headstones are responsible for keeping them tidy and for removing them within thirty days, and no ornamentation should be left beside or behind headstones. Another new trend is green burials. If our church wishes to draft cemetery bylaws, a committee will need to be formed.

Under the heading of old business, the board first took up topics that emerged out of Floyd Mast's report, particularly the question whether we wished to form a cemetery committee. To Kenny's question how many cemetery plots are still remaining, Floyd said that he estimates about thirty in total, having just sold another recently to a man whose inquiry Pastor Jonathan had forwarded to him. Also, to a question about whether we have flag holders for small American flags in advance of Memorial Day, Floyd said that we could get some.

To the question of whether we had ever had one before, or (if so) whether there were any past cemetery bylaws, Floyd said he was unsure. One board member asked whether there was any real work for a cemetery committee to do if Floyd had his notes from the Willow Street meeting. Rebekah Brown responded that we would still need to develop clear policies for our church cemetery. She suggested that any cemetery committee formed could meet in July or August once Floyd has gotten further answers from Eckenroth, and she then volunteered her husband Pastor Jonathan to type up any rules that the cemetery committee might suggest, so that the board can then vote on them. Returning to cemetery committee, Barry made a motion to form such a committee; this was seconded by Esther Stauffer and passed unanimously. Del Ream volunteered to serve on the committee.

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Also under old business, Floyd updated the board regarding HVAC plans for the fellowship hall. The trustees hoped to meet with Ian Pammer to seek his expert counsel, and had already gotten his perspective on a recent suggestion to go with a cheaper unit without heat pumps. Floyd relayed to the board, in response to a question that, while we had hoped to save money this way, the problem is that the better brands do not make air-conditioning units without heat pumps these days, and the less expensive brands have the downside that they are harder to find parts for and repair when they inevitably break. Barry and Del raised the question of whether we could justify the cost of the higher-quality heating/air-conditioning units for the fellowship hall, given that we expect to use them only in the summers. Rebekah chimed in by catching everyone up on the context of the discussion, which will no doubt be continued by the trustees as they deliberate in their next trustee meeting.

Continuing with old business, Rebekah Brown inquired whether any further discussion was needed for the upcoming yard sale and soup sale event scheduled for Saturday, June 8, 2024. Esther inquired whether she should post a sign-up sheet for ingredient donations and baked goods, and the board asked her to do so. Del asked whether Rebekah and Pastor Jonathan would take care of getting signs made for the event, and they said they would, adding that an ad had already been put on Facebook for the event.

The final item of old business pertained to the special service planned for Sunday, June 9, 2024, when we will have The Good News Travelin' Band leading us in an outdoor service in the church pavilion. Esther talked about the need for set-up, and asked whether someone would ensure that the pavilion is plugged in for electricity. Floyd Mast said that he would handle that.

Under the heading of new business, the board talked about the church property's summer care. Floyd inquired about mulching and said that he can supply the mulch, with some reimbursement from the church. By consensus, the board determined to take care of mulching at the church clean-up day, which they set for Saturday, May 18, 2024. As for weeding at the church, Esther Stauffer asked whether we might ask our church cleaner Mabel Newswanger to add that to her services once a month, for an additional fee. The board lauded what a fabulous job Mabel does in cleaning our church, and how she pays such excellent attention to occasional needs that arise, like the stickness of the fellowship hall floor after our Holy Saturday breakfast. After a discussion of how long weeding takes ("not so bad if you keep after it," one board member said), various suggested pay increases were proposed. In the end, Floyd made a motion to accept Barry's proposal of offering Mabel an extra $75/month for this service. The motion was seconded by Rebekah Brown and passed unanimously.

In other new business, Esther asked whether we had representatives attending National Conference this year. Pastor Jonathan said he would be there, and lay delegate Rebekah Brown said she would also be there. Both said that they would submit their receipts for reimbursement of expenses afterwards. On another note, Rebekah added that she had plans this coming month (May 2024) to send out donation request letters for our August church auction.

There being no further business after that, on motion of Barry Ream, as seconded by Dave Rissler, the board adjourned its meeting, to reconvene following the worship service on **Sunday, June 2, 2024**.

Statistical Report (April 2024)

	Worship Service Attendance		Offerings Received
04/07/24	27		$915.00
04/14/24	31		$880.00
04/21/24	26		$1,270.00
04/28/24	23		$485.00
Average:	27 (26.75)	Total:	$3,550.00

Yard Sale, Craft Fair & Soup Sale

When: Saturday, June 8, 2024
8am – 1pm

Where: Mt. Culmen EC Church
1885 Turkey Hill Road
East Earl, PA

(8am until Sold Out)

Food items sold out of fellowship hall

Cold soups to take home, including:

- Chicken Corn Noodle
- Ham and Bean
- Chili
- Hamburger Vegetable

Pints: $4
Quarts: $8

Other items for sale:

- Baked Goods
- Ham & Cheese Sandwiches
- Hot Dogs & Chips

Food sales by cash or card (credit/debit)
Yard sales by cash only

Spaces for rent:

- $10 space in our fellowship hall
  - Table is provided
- $5 space in pavilion or on lawn
  - Bring your own table; or, rent one for an additional $5

Tables and spaces are limited, so call Yvonne Styer to reserve your space today!

(717) 413-8342

Followed the next day by a special service in our church pavilion, led by The Good News Travelin' Band!
Sunday, June 9, 2024, at 10:00am – bring your lawn chairs!

National Conference 2024 Digest

Due to technical difficulties at National Conference 2024, Pastor Jonathan does not presently have access to the materials needed to do a full write-up of the event. While some supplementary material may appear in next month's issue, in the meantime please enjoy the official 2024 National Conference Digest (lightly edited), below.

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

National Conference commenced at 1:30pm in the Eisenhower Campus Center [of Messiah University] with singing, prayer, and a message. The message was given by Kingdom Extension Associate Rev. Michael Snedecker, who encouraged the conference to pursue Christlike community by living out the fruit of the Spirit, not the deeds of the flesh. Bishop Randy Sizemore led the entire Conference in Holy Communion.

Following the service of Holy Communion, the National Conference began the business session and covered the necessary introductory items. Officers' reports were shared, beginning with Rev. Brad Hatter giving the National Conference Secretary's report. Then the National Conference Treasurer's report was presented by Mr. Carl Butler, Jr., who shared that investments are up and ministry fund income has increased.

The Episcopacy Committee's report was given by the chairman, Rev. Keith Blank, who shared that the committee seeks to provide confidential support for the bishop and believes that Bishop Sizemore is doing a great job serving the denomination. Then Bishop Randy Sizemore gave the Conference Network Team's report with thanksgiving, asking District Field Directors and Associates to stand as the Conference expressed appreciation with applause. Kevin Henry presented the Conference Support Team's report, thanking EC Church Center staff for their hard work.

The National Conference continued with the Ministerial Development report by Ministerial Development Associate Rev. Matt Hill, who continues to work with credentialing. He encouraged pastors to have adequate rest and suggested opportunities for pastors to enjoy a pastors' retreat. He asked Rev. Cam Smith to share about the Pastoral Assessment Center. Rev. Cam Smith told us about the impact the Pastoral Assessment Center has had over the years and how important it is to not only have healthy churches but also to have healthy pastors. Rev. Hill then asked Rev. Adam Roberts to share about the Institute for Christian Leadership (ICL), and he told us that the mission has remained the same and continues to offer education to our churches, regardless of educational background, while also informing us of some changes that have come to ICL.

Rev. Matt Hill continued with the credentialing report. The questions for applicants were charged to Evan Clelan, Chezaire Dominique, Jacob Farnham, Keith House, William Lockhart, Devin Miller, Nelson Shertzer, and Douglas Shuey. In closed session, the following statuses were approved:

- National Itinerant Elder: Jesse Bills, Vincent Jones
- Local Itinerant Elder: James 'Janor' Bestwick, Jeffrey Merwine, Richard Sergi
- National Ordained Elder as Transfer: William Lockhart
- Certified Lay Preacher: Timothy Bivins
- Licensed Candidate: Chezaire Dominique, Evan Clelan, Jacob Farnham, Douglas Shuey
- Approved Pastor: Keith House, Nelson Shertzer
- Approved Candidate: Devin Miller
- Superannuation Status: Keith Blank, Richard Sergi, Kenneth Wiest, Kirk Wolfe

The annual renewals of credentials, notifications of transfer, and notifications of removal were granted.

The Finance Committee report was given by Mr. Carl Butler, Jr., and Executive Director Kevin Henry. They made corrections and amended the budget. All motions presented were adopted. The ministry fund rate will remain at 5.65%. The COLA is encouraged for pastoral compensation increases. The Conference Report had individual items that were adopted by the National Conference.

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Stationing Elder ballots were cast. Rev. Brad Hatter was elected as a Stationing Elder for the Susquehanna Region, and Rev. Robert Shuey for the Delaware Region.

Following dinner, worship was led by Rev. Bruce Sellers. Then, Bishop Randy Sizemore gave the Episcopal Address. He emphasized the importance of being a movement of God in our culture today by remembering our evangelical roots. He highlighted how our churches are living that movement out now while also calling on churches to continue the movement into the future. This passion comes with a plan to multiply our evangelism efforts, multiplying disciples and planting churches as pioneers to change the world. To be a dynamic movement will continue to take hard work and sacrifice as we change the world with Jesus in faith.

The evening concluded with a closing hymn and fellowship among the conference.

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Following worship through song led by Chris Lehigh, Rev. J. Ted Rathman gave the Global Ministries Community's presentation, welcoming missionaries who were able to attend conference. He asked anyone who had been on a domestic and/or international mission trip to stand. More than half of the conference stood up. The Global Ministries Community desires to help the local church join God in what he is doing around the world through mission trip opportunities that will ignite a passion which infects the local church to be on fire for his mission, bringing about transformation. Val Schubert shared about the work that she and her husband do in Honduras, which came from a seed that was planted in their hearts through short-term missions. Rev. Rathman concluded his report by sharing some updates about our international churches.

The morning business session continued with the EC Benefits Corporation report given by Rev. Frank Schock. There were nominations for board members, which were approved.

The Missional Alignment Community report was given by Rev. Tim Valentino. He proposed the approval of the document on the role of women in ministry, fulfilling what was asked of the Faith and Doctrine Committee; this report also included a summary statement which captured our historic and current rule and practice of ordination of elders/pastors. There was discussion on the conference floor about the ordination of women. The documents and report were approved.

Rev. Lester Zimmerman [of Petra Church, New Holland] gave a presentation titled "Understanding Homosexuality and Transgenderism." His compassionate yet bold presentation encouraged the listener to have a biblical understanding of these issues and shared how the church can respond in our culture today.

After a missions-themed luncheon held by the Global Ministries Community where Val Schubert spoke about her ministry in Honduras, there was an equipping experience where the conference was challenged to be a dynamic movement of God in the area of evangelism. This was led by Church Health Associate Rev. Wayne Houck, who shared his report and led us in the equipping experience. During his presentation, he highlighted the importance of discipling youth and encouraged a partnership with Christian Endeavor. He shared with us four main concerns many churches share. First, we do not have many young people. Second, the community has changed. Third, we do not have enough money or volunteers. And lastly, our people do not want to change. Rev. Houck will continue to be a resource to help churches navigate these concerns.

During the equipping experience, the conference was split into small groups meeting in different locations to allow for dicussion of what evangelism looks like.

The afternoon session continued with an Operation Christmas Child presentation. Rev. Dan Blank told us about the number of shoeboxes that have been donated as well as churches who participated. The special speaker was Izabella McMillion, who shared how the gift of a simple shoebox helped to transform her life.

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In the evening, worship through music was led by Rev. Bruce Sellers, with a message provided by Rev. Matthew Hill for the ordination service of James 'Janor' Bestwick, Jeffrey Merwine, and Richard 'Rick' Sergi. Concluding our evening was sweet fellowship with an ice cream and cookie reception.

Friday, May 24, 2024

National Conference started the day with inspiring worship by Rev. Bruce Sellers.

The Kingdom Extension Associate, Rev. Michael Snedecker, gave his report. He shared in his report about the new church plants and how he is trying to equip churches and church leaders for multiplication. He also encouraged churches to utilize the resource MissionInsite that helps churches learn the demographics and needs of their communities.

There were two resolutions made that were presented by Executive Director Kevin Henry: the closure of East Berlin Countryside Fellowship and the disaffiliation of Trinity, Womelsdorf, were approved.

The Conference continued with the Memorial Report and recognition of retirees. The retirees recognized were Keith Blank, Richard 'Rick' Sergi, William Stoffel, Kenneth Wiest, and Kirk Wolfe.

Bishop Sizemore gave a closing message to the conference.

The 2024 National Conference adjourned by singing together "Wonderful Grace of Jesus," followed by prayer.

We appreciate the women of our congregation!
These are the flowers we distributed on Mother's Day (May 12, 2024).

Birthdays (June 2024)		Anniversaries (June 2024)
6/4 – Pauline Good	6/14 – Ian Pammer	6/14 – Ken and Yvonne Styer
6/15 – Kenneth Ault	6/22 – Bob Snader	6/17 – Leon and Jean Hess
6/28 – David Rissler	6/29 – Earl Good	6/30 – John and Kim Sweigart

Preaching Calendar (June – July 2024)

Worship services commence at 10:00 AM on Sundays. We hope to see you there with us!

June 2 (Pentecost 2):
Sermon Title: "Appointment and Calling"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 4:1-2, 8, 16-17, 25-26
"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" (53)
"How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds" (57)

June 9 (Pentecost 3):
Pastor Jonathan will be away for a spiritual renewal week June 5-12, including attendance at a theology conference in Minnesota.
Instead of our usual service, we're planning something special:
Bring your lawn chairs for a time of outdoor worship in the pavilion with music and testimonies by the Good News Travelin' Band!

June 16 (Pentecost 4):
Sermon Title: "And He Died"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 5:1-20
"If I Must Die" (insert)
"Abide with Me; Fast Falls the Eventide" (531)

June 23 (Pentecost 5):
Sermon Title: "The One God Took"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:1-4; 5:15-24
"Just a Closer Walk with Thee" (356)
"Enoch, the Seventh, Walked with God" (insert)

June 30 (Pentecost 6):
Sermon Title: "A Cry for Relief"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 5:25-32
"All Ye Who Seek for Sure Relief" (insert)
"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (34)

July 7 (Pentecost 7): (Holy Communion)
Sermon Title: "Wars, Tears, and the Altar of God"
Scripture Reading: Judges 20:1-7, 23-26, 35; 21:2-4
"O Cross, That Only Know'st the Woes" (insert)
"Great Ruler of the Earth and Skies" (insert)

July 14 (Pentecost 8):
Sermon Title: "Ruin in the Land"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:1-7, 11-12
"Astonished and Distressed" (insert)
"The World is Very Evil" (insert)

July 21 (Pentecost 9):
Sermon Title: "Noah Contra Mundum"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:7-10
"Amazing Grace" (278)
"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (421)

July 28 (Pentecost 10):
Sermon Title: "The Divine's in the Details"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:13-22
"O Cease, My Wand'ring Soul" (insert)
"The Heaven-Bound Mariner" (insert)

August 4 (Pentecost 11):
Sermon Title: "Patient God, Patient Man"
Scripture Reading: Genesis 6:3 + 6:22–7:10
"Depth of Mercy! Can There Be?" (253)
"Out of the Ark" (insert)

Quotes for Thought

"My sons may have sinned before the Lord through boasting..., for pride is an abomination before God."

– an unknown Jewish writer

Testament of Job 15.6-8 (1st century BC or 1st century AD), in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 1:845

"Pondering our Father's care and mercy, we ought not ourselves to be insensitive and inhumane in nurturing our brothers, but grieve with those who grieve and weep with those who weep. We should, to the best of our ability, stand them upright with the help and consolation of our love. … You see your wounded brother laid low and injured in the line of battle by the Adversary. When the devil tries to slay him whom he has wounded, Christ instead pleads that he whom he has redeemed should not completely perish. To which of these two sides do we belong? In whose ranks do we stand?"

– St. Cyprian of Carthage

Letters 55.19.1-2 (AD 251), in *Popular Patristics Series* 72:130-131

"Living a just and holy life requires one to be capable of an objective and impartial evaluation of things – to love things, that is to say, in the right order, so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved, or have a greater love for what should be loved less … No sinner, precisely as sinner, is to be loved; and every human being, precisely as human, is to be loved on God's account; God, though, on his own. And if God is to be loved more than any human being, we all ought to love God more than ourselves.

– St. Augustine of Hippo

On Christian Doctrine 1.27 §28 (c. AD 396), in *Ancient Christian Writers* I/11:118

"Just as the darkness does not go away unless the light is present, so the disease of the soul is not banished unless He who takes away our infirmities comes and unites himself with us."

– Symeon the New Theologian

Ethical Discourses 7 (c. AD 990), in *Popular Patristics Series* 15:93

"We truly love God when, with devoted minds, we observe his precepts, not in fear of punishment and the slavery of fear, but in the ardor of love and the freedom of charity. … Those who pray ought to make a single, sole, and determined petition – namely, that with suppliant devotion we ask for what we should love. After you have considered everything, what is this thing but the blessedness of immutable glory? Just as we have to love blessedness, so we should try to obtain it by our prayers."

– Coluccio Salutati

On the World and Religious Life 2.11.9, 17 (c. AD 1381), in *I Tatti Renaissance Library* 62:303, 305

"Whoever has ideas about God other than what is true, or who does not believe in the God that the authority of Divine Scripture portrays, does not believe in God but puts his hope in an idol. … Whatever a person prefers to God, that he makes his god. … Scripture teaches us that God is present everywhere and nothing is hidden from his eyes. Do people believe this who daily, under the eyes of God, commit crimes which they would not dare to commit if someone were to witness them? … Think of those who ponder the magnitude of their crimes and despair of obtaining pardon. Do they believe that God is infinitely merciful? It is not likely that they do. To know God, then, with a lively faith is of the greatest importance for a holy and happy life."

– Erasmus of Rotterdam

Explanation of the Apostles' Creed 11.1 (AD 1533), in *Collected Works of Erasmus* 70:275-276

"The vast body of the people have yet to learn what are the real constituents of human happiness; and alas! the whole tendency of modern thought and action is to intensify that universal and ruinous theory that all things have to be measured by their money value, and there is no other. If ever the masses came to understand that money is the meanest and most powerless factor in creating human happiness, and that all the great and good things in life are unpurchasable, things might swing round to an equilibrium."

– Patrick Augustine Sheehan

Letter to Oliver Wendell Holmes, 6 October 1912, in *Holmes-Sheehan Correspondence* (Fordham University Press, 1993), 67

PRAYER GUIDE

- ***We praise God*** **for all the wondrous blessings he's given us, most notably the ministry of his Son (in death, resurrection, and exaltation to the Father's right hand) and the gift of his Holy Spirit; and** ***we pray*** **that God would glorify his name above all else and would bring his kingdom more fully to earth.**
- *We pray for* **our denomination, our congregation, and the church universal**, that God would bless us at all levels with faithfulness, wisdom, vision, and fortitude to earnestly labor in his vineyard.
  - *We pray particularly for* our pastor **Rev. Jonathan J. Brown** and for **our church board**.
  - *We pray also for* **our Evangelical Congregational Church leadership**: our bishop **Randy Sizemore**, executive director **Kevin Henry**, and district field director **Keith Miller**; the **Global Ministries Community** under **Ted Rathman**; the **Kingdom Extension Community** under **Mike Snedeker**; the **Church Health Community** under **Gary Kuehner**; the **Missional Alignment Community** under **Bishop Randy Sizemore**; and the **Ministerial Development Community** under **Matthew Hill**.
- *We pray for* **our missionary partners** (such as **Dan Quigley** and others), that God would keep them safe and faithful, would focus their efforts on God's work, and would grant success in accordance with his holy will.
- *We pray for* **other churches and pastors in our community**, that God would keep all congregations united in one holy faith and devoted to the ardent service of one and the same kingdom and of its King, Jesus.
- *We pray for* the **salvation of our whole community and its maturation in Christian discipleship**, knowing that there is hope in Jesus for all people and for entire communities to reflect the righteous love of God.
- *We pray for* **an end to disease outbreaks:** COVID-19, mpox, cholera, dengue, diphtheria, anthrax, flu, RSV.
- *We pray for* **those suffering in the wake of disasters around the world**, that God would have mercy:
  - *We pray for* those afflicted by natural disasters such as famine; drought in Africa; wildfires in Canada and elsewhere; heat waves in India, Mexico, etc.; tornadoes in Oklahoma, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Iowa, Texas, Kentucky, and Arkansas; storms in Puerto Rico, India, and Texas; flooding in Kenya, China, Brazil, Haiti, Indonesia, Afghanistan, and Armenia; landslides in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea; and the volcanic eruption in Indonesia.
  - *We pray for* those afflicted by accidents such as boat accidents in Ontario, Tunisia, Hungary, and Egypt; bus/truck accidents in Pakistan, Indonesia, Peru, Turkey, India, and Florida; the train collision in Argentina; explosions in Tanzania and Ohio; fires in Vietnam; structure collapses in China, India, South Africa, Mexico, and Spain; and the wastewater tank maintenance disaster in Italy.
- *We pray also for* **those victimized by violence and social ills**, especially the Israel-Hamas war and Russian invasion of Ukraine, that God would make his peace manifest to the injured, traumatized, and grieving.
  - *We pray additionally for* those afflicted by the Uyghur genocide in China; civil war in Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, Myanmar, etc.; India-Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan, Sudan-South Sudan, and Armenia-Azerbaijan conflicts; insurgency in Egypt, Colombia, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, Iran, Iraq, the Maghreb, Nigeria, Niger, India, Peru, Libya, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Uganda, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Sudan, Turkey, and Indonesia; gang/cartel wars in Mexico, Ecuador, and Haiti; ambushes in France, Malaysia, Haiti, and elsewhere; riots in Kyrgyzstan; protest-related violence in Turkey, France, New Caledonia, and elsewhere; shootings in New Caledonia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Mali, Michigan, and Minnesota; stabbings in Australia, China, Switzerland, and Germany; bombings in Congo and Afghanistan; arson in Poland; kidnappings in Nigeria and elsewhere; crises in Gaza and Haiti; vandalism and attacks on churches; the American opioid epidemic; human rights violations (e.g., abortion and human trafficking); the rising wave of antisemitism; and the refugee crisis.
- *We pray for* all who serve and protect us, including **civic leaders**, **police**, **firefighters**, **medical responders**, and **members of the military**: May God keep them safe, just, wise, sincere, humble, and accountable.
- *We pray for* **our nation and its government** at all levels and in all branches, that God would move our leaders to repent of unjust or unmerciful practices and laws; that God would crown them with wisdom, security, peace, and civility toward all; and that God would give them godly hearts to live and govern rightly.
- *We pray for* **the persecutors and maligners of the church around the world**:
  - *We pray for* the conversion of terrorists and other people of violence into disciples of the Prince of Peace.
  - *We pray for* the wisdom of God to be made manifest to skeptics and critics.
  - *We pray for* the Spirit's boldness to fill the hearts of all believers to witness to Jesus in life and in death.

PRAYER GUIDE

- *We pray for* **the families and friends of many who have entered their rest in the past year**, including:
  - For the family of **Sherry Stoltzfus** (Esther's sister-in-law's mother), who entered rest on May 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **Jim Brubaker**, who entered rest on May 5, 2023.
  - For the family of **Clarence Bauman** (Joyce Good's brother), who entered rest on June 17, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ben Schweitzer** (Kim Sweigart's son-in-law's friend), who entered rest July 10, 2023.
  - For the family of **Mary Martin** (Abby Eberly's friend's sister), who entered rest on July 15, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ray Snader**, who entered rest on July 17, 2023.
  - For the family of **John Kendig** (Sharon Mast's brother-in-law), who entered rest on July 19, 2023.
  - For the family of **Mary Skiba** (Sally Arment's cousin), who entered rest on August 20, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ivan Zimmerman** (Ray Snader's brother-in-law), who entered rest on August 22, 2023.
  - For the family of **Della Bollinger** (Floyd Mast's aunt), who entered rest on August 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Harley Steenhoek** (the Walkers' grandpa), who entered rest on September 2, 2023.
  - For the family of **Elsie Martin** (Jean Hess's great-aunt), who entered rest on September 8, 2023.
  - For the family of **Clarence Good** (Jean Hess's uncle), who entered rest on September 13, 2023.
  - For the family of **Luke Ringler** (Abby's son-in-law's brother), who entered rest on September 25, 2023.
  - For the family of **Pat Street** (Nancy Mountz's sister), who entered rest on September 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Daniel Newswanger** (Mabel's husband), who entered rest on October 8, 2023.
  - For the family of **Joyce Martin** (Jean Hess's cousin), who entered rest on October 11, 2023.
  - For the family of **Shirley Riggins** (Deb Messner's mother), who entered rest on October 13, 2023.
  - For the family of **Titus Burkholder** (Leon Hess's cousin), who entered rest on October 16, 2023.
  - For the family of **Erwin Sensenig Jr.** (Sally Arment's brother), who entered rest on November 7, 2023.
  - For the family of **Henrietta Hoshauer**, who entered rest on November 18, 2023.
  - For the family of **Bob Schade** (Cindy Ruth's uncle), who entered rest on November 23, 2023.
  - For the family of **Harvey Sauder**, who entered rest on November 25, 2023.
  - For the family of **David Kulp**, who entered rest on November 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Bill Sprecher** (Sharon Mast's uncle), who entered rest on December 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **April Shirk** (Joan Swayze's daughter), who entered rest on December 7, 2023.
  - For the family of **Evaleen Weinhold** (Joan Swayze's aunt), who entered rest on December 16, 2023.
  - For the family of **Larry Fisher** (Abby Eberly's cousin's husband), who entered rest December 29, 2023.
  - For the family of **Dot Yohn** (Shirley's daughter's mother-in-law), who entered rest on January 3, 2024.
  - For the family of **Don Mellinger**, who entered rest on January 6, 2024.
  - For the family of **Jace London** (Cindy Ruth's neighbor's great-grandson), who entered rest Jan. 19, 2024.
  - For the family of **Lori Zimmerman**, who entered rest on January 19, 2024.
  - For the family of **Eugene Martin** (Esther Stauffer's uncle), who entered rest on January 19, 2024.
  - For the family of **Donna Rhodes** (Cindy Ruth's sister-in-law), who entered rest on January 21, 2024.
  - For the family of **Noah Sauder** (Jean Hess's cousin), who entered rest on February 3, 2024.
  - For the family of **Miriam Burkholder** (Jean Hess's cousin), who entered rest on February 26, 2024.
  - For the family of **Renaldo Angeleni** (the Hesses' friend), who entered rest on February 27, 2024.
  - For the family of **Noah Wenger** (Esther Stauffer's uncle), who entered rest on February 28, 2024.
  - For the family of **Karen Winter** (Jeff Kohl's sister-in-law), who entered rest on April 1, 2024.
  - For the family of **Bart Messner**, who entered rest on May 17, 2024.
  - For the family of **Rev. Hal Scanlin**, who entered rest on May 19, 2024.
  - For the family of **Rev. John Ragsdale**, who entered rest on May 22, 2024.
  - For the family of **Lucy Snader** (Bob Snader's aunt), who entered rest on May 22, 2024.
  - For the family of **Larry Weinhold** (Barry's friend / Vera's 3rd-cousin), who entered rest May 28, 2024.
    - May the Lord give immeasurable peace, strength, and comfort to all who face loss and grief.

PRAYER GUIDE

- *We pray for* **all dementia sufferers** and for **their caretakers**, that God would lighten burdens, restore clarity to injured minds, and speak directly to hearts and souls with his comfort, his peace, and the light of grace.
- *We pray for* **all suffering from cancer** – (including Randy Vandill, Cindy Ebersole, Troy Frey, Lisa Mast, Sue Stoltzfus [Lee and Martha's daughter-in-law], Doris Snader, Betty Kennedy [Del Ream's niece-in-law], Barb King, Earl Martin [Miriam Rissler's brother-in-law], Brandy Rhodes [Pastor Jonathan's cousin], Gene Sensenig, Adrianne Hedges [Brenna Pammer's friend], Deana Bernardi [Floyd Mast's friend], Ray Boley [Joyce Good's friend], Matthew Lawrie [Sharon Mast's son's friend], Rev. Keith Miller, Rev. Marlin Lafferty, Rev. Don Wert, etc.) – that God shield them from pain, restore and comfort them, and bless their doctors.
- *We pray for* the **other assorted health concerns (and other needs)** of:
  - Earl and Pauline Good + John Good (Earl's brother) + Mildred Dissinger (Earl's sister) + David Good
  - Barry Ream + Delores Jaxel + Clair Kohl + Jeff Kohl + Henry Kohl + Shawn and Candace Sweigart
  - Floyd Mast + Steven Mast (Floyd's son) + Cindy Bannon + Marilyn Wilson (Cindy's mother)
  - Grayson Sweigart (Kim's grandson) + Cherri Snader + Jim Becker + Raymond Bannon
  - Dennis Burkholder + Wilmer Burkholder + Linda Burkholder + Mary Andrews
  - Edna Binner + Ed Diem + John Grote (Esther Stauffer's friend)
  - Vera Kochel + Brandon Wilson + Floyd Heuyard + Betty Musser
  - Violet Stauffer + Paul Ford + Becky Wallace + Emma 'Tiny' Shirk
  - Jerry Felpel and Doris Getz + Dawn Acevedo (Cindy Hoffer's sister)
  - Josh Kendig (Sharon Mast's son) + Connie Dieter (Leon and Jean Hess's daughter)
  - Larsen Houck (Shirley Good's great-grandson) + Kayley Smith (the Hesses' granddaughter)
  - Ray Arment + Butch and Mike Skiba + Emily Sensenig + Jeannine Sensenig
  - Dennis Wanner (Deb Kimmel's brother) + Sharon Geib (Deb's sister)
  - Veanna Baxter + Julia Reed (Veanna's sister) + Miriam Rissler
  - Jeremy Kurman + Warren Weinhold + Jody Freeman
  - Jess Pennepacker + Charles Yingst + Ralph Mountz
  - Carl and Grace Nolt + Don Pickle + Carl Martin
  - Robert and Barbara Sparr + Rodger Whittaker
  - Elizabeth Zimmerman (John Eberly's sister)
  - Dorothy Long (Sharon Mast's boss's sister)
  - Shirley Buchanan + Alice Vidzicki
  - Madelynne Walker + Ben + Tim
  - Gloria Hoffman + Minerva Hufford
  - Tory Lingg + Barbara Simpson + Diane
  - Donna Sensenig + Larry Sensenig + Daryll Sensenig
  - Pat Brian + Larry and Cookie White (the Hesses' friends)
  - Delores, Jeremiah, and Bobby Snader + Ben Doullin + Shirley Sweigart
  - Linda Talbot (Cindy Ruth's sister) + Tom Schwer (Sharon Mast's stepbrother)
  - Rebecca Lucas (the Walkers' family friend) + Rebecca Horst + Dillon Dewire
  - Ken Keen and Nancy Fox (Floyd Mast's friends) + Barb (Anita Boley's friend)
  - Ken Styer + Bret Hoffert + Jethro Hursh + Rev. Kirk and Susan Wolfe
  - Linda Sweitzer (Abby Eberly's friend) + Bob Buckwalter (Abby's friend's husband)
  - Kathryn Shirk (Jean Hess's aunt) + Sonya Shirey (Jean's friend) + Diane (Jean's daughter's co-worker)
- *We pray for* **other neighbors, friends, and believers in need**, that God would heal, provide, and comfort.
- *We pray for* **a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit** upon our church, our community, our county, our nation, the Evangelical Congregational Church, and the church universal. *We pray for* the whole church to be filled with a spiritual zeal for worship, evangelism, and discipleship. **May the fires of revival fall!**
- ***We praise God* for all the prayers we've seen him answer and for his everlasting faithfulness!**